BLUE STAR MOTHERS, 4 | MAKING PROGRESS, 9 | HOLIDAY LIFE, 15

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Recalling the past

Cemetery tour tells stories of World War I veterans

See story on page 6

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"There's no one who understands what a military mother and family goes through other than another miltary mother."

- Cecile Fazio

See story page 4

ON THE COVER

Richard Donohue, president of the Cromwell Historical Society, led a Hallowed Ground Walking Tour of historic Cromwell Hillside Cemetery on Nov. 5. The focus was on residents who served in World War I.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
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Photo by Mark Jahne

Several members of the Blue Star Mothers staffed a booth at the Big K Flea Market in Newington to raise funds for their organization and its charitable causes. They are, from left, Karen Kuziel, Jackie El-Haichen, Jean Jordan, Cathy Hodlin, Cecile Fazio and Terry Latimer.

"There's no one who understands what a military mother and family goes through other than another military mother."

– Cecile Fazio

Support, and more

Blue Star Mothers all share a common bond

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Membership in the Blue Star Mothers has a few basic requirements. You have to be a mother and you must have a child currently serving in the armed forces, National Guard or reserves.

The Connecticut chapter of this nationwide organization meets monthly on the third Wednesday in Cromwell Town Hall. Middlesex County Blue Star Mothers, CT3, is affiliated with Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.

There were more than 30 mothers present at a recent meeting at which a wide variety of topics were discussed.

This is a support group, a service group, an educational group and more. Some of them are longtime members and others are new to the fold. All are embraced as equal partners. They come from cities and towns all over central Connecticut.

The group is always looking for ways to raise money for worthwhile causes related to the military. Several mothers staffed a booth at the end of September at the Big K Flea Market in Newington.

They have donated money to such organizations as the Connecticut National Guard Foundation, Run for the Fallen, Fisher House, APK Charities and Wreaths Across America, among others.

Cecile Fazio of Cromwell is president of the local chapter.

"We are the only chapter in the state as of right now," she said.

Fazio is assisted by Cathy Hodlin of Cromwell, a past president, and Janice Beaucar of Middletown, vice president.

Fazio's son Angelo has spent more than 11 years in the U.S. Army and serves as the gunner aboard a Bradley Fighting Vehicle. He holds the rank of first sergeant and is assigned to the famous 101st Airborne Division air assault unit at Fort Campbell, Ky. "He loves the Army," his mother said.

Angelo Fazio has served two tours of duty in Iraq, where he was attached to the 3rd Infantry Division, and another in Afghanistan.

Cecile Fazio described having a child in the armed forces as a roller-coaster ride. Her father-in-law served in the Italian Army.

Over the years she has experienced a wide range of emotions. She worries that he may be deployed again because of the current tensions between the United States and North Korea.

"There's no one who understands what a military mother and family goes through other than another military mother," Fazio said.

"My son is a captain in the U.S. Marine Corps," Hodlin said.

Andrew Hodlin joined the Marines in 2009 and is now a member of the Reserves. He works for a security company and, when activated, his assignment is infantry instructor at Camp Pendleton in California.

He has served overseas in Afghanistan and South Korea.

"That [latter] deployment was almost just as scary," his mother said. "As he gets older he tells me less and less about what's going on. Andrew is my only son."

She added that her brother was a gunnery sergeant in the Marines

and her father served in the Army during World War II.

Beaucar's story is somewhat different. Her military child is a female.

"My daughter enlisted in the Connecticut Army National Guard in April 2001 and went for her basic training after 9/11," she said. "I come from a family of peace activists."

Her daughter, Lee Thompson, is the mother of two children and a captain currently assigned to a National Guard unit in Middletown where she works in logistics. Thompson's husband is a member of the National Guard Reserve and both of them have done tours of duty in Kuwait.

"She doesn't tell me a lot," Beaucar said.

Her husband Pete is a veteran of the Vietnam War era.

Every meeting includes the Missing Man Table. This is a place of honor intended to remember the fallen, missing, or imprisoned members of the military. Each of the five place settings has a coaster denoting the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps and Navy. **CL**

Courtesy photo

A contingent from the Cromwell-based Middlesex County Blue Star Mothers visited Arlington National Cemetery for Wreaths Across America Day a few years ago. They placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"We, the mothers of members of the Armed Forces of the United States of America, do unite to establish a permanent organization. Desiring to continue to be of service to our nation, we dedicate our time, and lives if necessary, to the perpetuation of democratic government, and are proud and honored that our sons and daughters have been chosen to serve their country." (Preamble)

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Richard Donohue points the way during a tour of Cromwell Hillside Cemetery. He is the president of the Cromwell Historical Society.

The Cromwell War Bureau presented this medal to each of the 114 veterans from town when they returned from service during World War I.

Photos by Lisa Brisson

Taking the tour

Cemetery walk recalls World War I veterans

by Mark Jahne
Editor

William Vinbladh, George Eager, Thomas Blake, Charles Kaiser, Helen Abel, Allen Kennedy, Isaac Proudman, Helen Sandstrom, Adolph Carlson and Ernest Nordgren all rest in peace in historic Cromwell Hillside Cemetery.

But they have more than that in common. All of them carry the history of World War I as a prominent part of their lives.

That was the topic of a Hallowed Ground Walking Tour the drizzling afternoon of Nov. 5, hosted by the Cromwell Hillside Cemetery Association and the Cromwell Historical Society.

CHS President Richard Donohue and members of the historical society's Juleps and Viragos group donned period attire and spoke alongside several of the graves. They mixed historical facts with various anecdotes to give a full picture of each person.

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Photos by Mark Jahne

Barbara Lesi reads some of the details of William Vinbladh's life during a walking tour of Cromwell Hillside Cemetery.

As Donohue explained it, Cromwell was an ethnically segregated town in the early 1900s. Many immigrants and first-generation Americans weren't getting along and terrible things were being said about each other in the newspapers of the time.

Those in particular conflict with one another were residents of Swedish, Irish and German ancestry. He contends that it was America's involvement in the war from 1917-1918 that changed all of this and brought the town together as a more united community.

"Something World War I did for Cromwell was blend all of that together," he said.

He further explained the geopolitical situation at the time and how numerous alliances were triggered following a political assassination.

Three women addressed the tour at its various stops: Barbara Lesi, Rebecca-Bayreuther Donohue and Elizabeth Burgess. They reviewed the history of each veteran, including their draft details and what they did upon their return to town.

"We are here to honor the sacrifice these men and women gave halfway around the world."

– Richard Donohue

William Vinbladh's draft report described his physical characteristics in a way that was not consistent with how he actually looked. No one knows why. He enlisted in the U.S. Army and became a charter member of the local American Legion post after returning from France.

Thomas Blake rose through the ranks to become an Army lieutenant. He was awarded both the Silver Star and Purple Heart and later served on the staff of Gov. Raymond Baldwin.

Helen Abel enlisted as an Army nurse. She served at Camp Bowie in Fort Worth, Texas, and became a nurse at Bristol Hospital following the war. She won many awards for her prowess as a gardener.

One wonders what kind of military experience Charles Kaiser endured. He was not only a German immigrant, but his name was the same as Germany's wartime leader, Kaiser Wilhelm.

Allen Kennedy served in the Army's motor transport corps and later worked as an electrician. Irish immigrant Isaac Proudman wore the uniform of the U.S. Navy in both world wars.

Helen Sandstrom graduated from the nurse

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Like the other tour guides, Rebecca-Bayreuther Donohue dressed in period attire from the early 1900s.

training school at Hartford Hospital and was one of the first two women to sign up as American Red Cross nurses during the war. She was stationed at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

Adolph Carlson, the son of Swedish immigrants, joined a military unit that was attached to the National Guard and traveled to Texas for an expedition against Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa. He then went to Europe as part of the Army's medical corps and, upon his return, became a charter member of the Cromwell Fire Department.

Ernest Nordgren, who came to town from Sweden, also served in the ambulance corps. An admittedly mediocre swimmer, he died in 1927 in an incident at Lake Pocotopaug when he tried to save a 17-year-old girl who was somehow being pulled under the water. They both drowned.

Some of the approximately 30 people in attendance spoke of seeing the graves of friends or family members as they walked along the wet grass.

Donohue said all of the World War I era men and women in uniform were welcomed back to town with a grand parade and celebration organized by the Cromwell War Bureau. Cities and towns all over the country had similar bureaus whose task was to support the troops and sell war bonds, among other things.

They presented a medal to each of the 114 from town who served. He noted that most of them were 20, or younger, when this call to arms changed their lives.

"We are here to honor the sacrifice these men and women gave halfway around the world," he said. **CL**

Elizabeth Burgess tells the story of one of the many World War I veterans whose remains lie in the historic cemetery.

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Making progress

Valour Green wall will remember Korean and Vietnam war veterans

by Mark Jahne
Editor

It started as a dream a year ago and now progress can be seen by those who drive past Valour Green on Main Street. Construction of a curved memorial wall is almost finished and American Legion Post 105 is selling engraved brick pavers to fund Phase 2 of the project.

Anyone can purchase a brick and dedicate it to whomever they like; the person does not have to be a military veteran. The cost of each brick is $150 and the pavers

The new memorial wall at Valour Green on Main Street is almost complete. It will honor veterans of the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Photo by Mark Jahne

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"This thing is going to be illuminated beautifully with LED lights."

– Lou Gagnon

will become part of a living memorial to those who served, as well as those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Valour Green is 2.5 acres of open land located adjacent to Holy Apostles College and bordered by Main Street, Prospect Hill Road and Fritsch Lane. The land was first dedicated to the veterans of those two wars in 1973 but nothing much was done except for the installation of two small plaques that were saved and are now attached to the new stone wall.

The original concept for the design came from resident Myron Johnson.

"The retaining wall is complete, the plaque wall is complete," said Lou Gagnon. "This thing is going to be illuminated beautifully with LED lights."

A U.S. Army veteran, he is one of the leaders of this effort. The walking path from Fritsch Lane to the monument is also finished.

Gagnon and fellow Army veteran Ed Wenners said the U.S. flag that currently flies above the site will be joined by six other flags including those representing the five armed services: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Navy and Marines.

The flagpole carrying the Stars and Stripes will be increased by five feet to 35 feet tall. All of the other poles will be installed at 30 feet. The earth work was donated by the town.

Both men are excitedly awaiting the arrival of lettering that will be mounted on the stone wall. It will read "In Honor of Those Who Served." Names of Korean and Vietnam veterans, both alive and deceased, will be listed.

They are hopeful that enough bricks will be sold to meet their financial needs.

"Anybody can buy pavers," Wenners said.

There is no time limit to the sales; they will be ongoing as needed. More than $7,000 has already been raised. Any extra money they raise will go into the American Legion's bank account to fund its longtime support of Legion baseball and perhaps other civic activities.

Both men are thankful to town government, local businesses, civic organizations and individuals for the support this project has received to date. Whenever possible, they have negotiated to have supplies either donated at no cost or purchased at a substantial discount.

That includes landscaping services and processed stone; the grass around the memorial site is lush and free of weeds. They also benefited from plenty of free labor. Almost 2,000 feet of electrical conduit was installed beneath the ground for the lighting.

"We have been successful in encouraging people that they should donate if they can," Gagnon said. "I'm really excited about this whole thing."

He said veterans are stopping by the site or otherwise seeking him out to praise the effort and tell him their personal stories. One of them was a helicopter pilot whose three closest friends were all shot down and killed.

At some point, a time capsule will be installed in the wall. Websites are being created for both the Valour Green Memorial and American Legion Post 105. **CL**

Anyone who is interested in purchasing an engraved brick may contact Lou Gagnon at 860-982-1565, Ed Wenners at 860-632-3172 or Richard Anderson at 860-985-4371.

Wise advice

Better Business Bureau looks out for consumers

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

For more than 100 years, the Better Business Bureau has focused on ensuring that companies are honest in their dealings with consumers.

"We've been helping create a marketplace where businesses and consumers can trust each other. We help solve disputes between consumers and businesses," Howard Schwartz said.

He is executive communications director of BBB of Connecticut, based in Cromwell.

"We also have accredited businesses, where the Better Business Bureau has done a thorough background check on the business. We've checked their advertising to make sure they're not making outrageous or false claims, as well as to see they are engaged in the best business practices," he added.

"We keep an ongoing watch for patterns of marketplace misbehavior. We are unique in the sense that consumers can visit our website or contact us to check out a business or charity to see whether there have been complaints by other consumers, how many complaints there have been, whether there's a pervasive pattern of the same type of complaints, as well as the way the company responds to those complaints.

"Probably the most egregious thing a business can do is not respond to a consumer complaint. We are, in a sense, a repository for information on a charity's and business's information, which is so important today because trust is such a valuable commodity and, like other currencies, trust is not easily earned, but it is easily lost."

BBB was founded in Connecticut in 1928; it moved to town from Wallingford in 2014.

"We are a nonprofit organization. Some people think we are a government entity. We are not. We are a nonprofit organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior," Schwartz said. "We're funded by accredited businesses; we used to call them members."

Photo by Lisa Brisson

Howard Schwartz, executive communications director of the BBB of Connecticut, urges consumers to do their research prior to signing a contract.

Asleep in the Dental Chair

Rocky Hill dentist offers treatment for the dental phobic

For some people going to the dentist can be a terrifying experience. The drills, the smells and oh, that awful needle!

But now there's a new way for the dentally challenged to get their needed treatment without having to go through all of the fear and anxiety. It's called sedation dentistry.

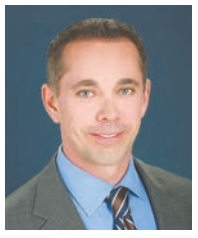
"The way it works is simple," says Rocky Hill patient, Mary Izzo. "One hour before my appointment I took a pill that Dr. Michalski prescribed to me. By the time I arrived at my appointment I was very relaxed."

The patient is then escorted to the dental chair. They are in a state of sedation but are able to respond to their environment. Dr. Michalski explains, "The patient will feel absolutely no pain and in fact will usually have little memory of the experience."

The patient's vital signs are monitored constantly throughout the treatment. "When they awaken a friend drives them home and in an hour or so they are pretty much back to normal,' says Dr. Michalski. Mary adds, "Except that I have no bad memories, and experience no pain or anxiety. I just watched the TV above the chair ... time seemed to fly by during my treatment!"

Is sleep dentistry only for chickens? Dr. Michalski says no. "Some people, while they are not at all afraid of dental treatment are highly resistant an anesthetic. They just can't get numb. Other people simply don't have the time to make repeated visits to the dentist and would rather have all their work done in one long visit. Sedation dentistry takes care of both issues."

For more information on sedation dentistry, call (860) 563-4544 or visit www.michalskimd.com.



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2016 Top 10 Complaint Statistics By Industry		
Rank	Industry Classification	Complaints
1	Telephone communications	32,919
2	Cellular Telephone Service & Supplies	30,013
3	Television - Cable CATV & Satellite	29,468
4	Auto Dealers - New Cars	25,364
5	Collection Agencies	16,817
6	Auto Dealers - Used Cars	15,894
7	Online Retailer	13,186
8	Furniture - Retail	13,172
9	Banks	11,438
10	Internet Shopping	10,115

2016 Top 10 Inquiries	
Industry Classification	Inquiries
Roofing Contractors	4,738,212
Contractors General	3,658,426
Collection Agencies	3,071,806
Auto Dealers - Used Cars	2,875,395
Plumbers	2,549,082
Construction & Remodeling Services	2,463,842
Heating and Air Conditioning	2,154,465
Home Builders	2,036,596
Auto Dealers - New Cars	1,946,351
Internet Shopping	1,924,264

The Better Business Bureau notes that the tendency is that most of the complaints it receives are from industries people deal with on a regular basis, such as communication and entertainment companies.

He added that not all businesses are eligible for accreditation, a process that must be renewed every year. Certain behaviors will exclude a business from accreditation, such as if there are government actions against the company relating to bad business practices or if the business has unresolved complaints against it.

The BBB also checks to ensure that the company is in compliance with licensing and registration requirements. There are currently more than 5,300 BBB-accredited businesses in Connecticut.

"We hold our accredited businesses to a higher standard because they commit themselves to our standards for trust; for example, to advertise honestly, to tell the truth, to be transparent. That one in particular is so important when it's not a face-to-face transaction," Schwartz said.

"Anyone can put up a website for very little money. It can look great, but it doesn't mean it's legitimate. What's involved with accreditation is we're in conversations with a business.

"It essentially outlines where the business is located, how long it's been in business, the principles of the business, all of the information we need to ensure a business is ethical, trustworthy and transparent."

Accredited businesses commit to operating according to certain policies.

"A business can have its accreditation revoked if it does not live up to our eight standards of trust," he said.

Drew Crandall, president of Keep In Touch, a marketing, media and training firm based in Vernon, applied for accreditation shortly after starting his company in the late 1980s.

"It was important to me as a brand-new entrepreneur. I wanted to support ethics in business. We live in a society where there are good guys and there are bad guys; there are scrupulous businesses and there are unscrupulous businesses. I wanted to support the cause," Crandall said.

"Really, if you drill it down, why I have been a supporter of the Better Business Bureau since 1989, the core issue to me is to support the good guys. For me, the issue is not what's the return on investment?' or what's in it for me? I believe in the cause," he said.

He added that's true looking at it from both a business-to-consumer angle as well as a business-to-business point of view.

"Sometimes people think the BBB is only relevant for businesses that sell products and services for consumers. That's only part of the picture," he said.

"If I'm looking as a business owner for suppliers, it's in my interest to check the BBB rating just as much as it is for a consumer. That's one dimension that sometimes doesn't come out."

BBB assigns letter grade ratings to businesses based on a number of criteria; Crandall's business has consistently earned an A+ rating. He said the BBB is all about credibility and accountability.

"In today's culture with all the

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communications tools and all the sales techniques people employ, it's possible for an organization to posture and pretend to be one thing when it's really another. This is a way of giving people the opportunity to look under the hood," he said.

While it might appear that the advent of such sites as Yelp make the BBB less necessary, Schwartz said he believes the opposite is true.

"The Better Business Bureau is more relevant now than ever before. Across the country, we have tens of thousands of accredited businesses who want to show consumers how hard they've worked to deal honestly and to build a solid reputation in the community and the marketplace as a whole," he said.

"Better Business Bureau is unique for many reasons. We're unique because we have a community of accredited businesses who have been thoroughly checked or verified, and we also publish redacted versions of consumer complaints and business responses.

"Sometimes a letter grade by itself – we have a letter grade system A+ to F – sometimes a letter grade does not tell the whole story, which is why we encourage consumers to thoroughly read a company's business review," he added.

"This is a way of giving people the opportunity to look under the hood."

– Drew Crandall

"Word of mouth has traditionally been the primary way of finding out about both good businesses and unethical businesses. Now you have the Internet, which contains reviews of products and services, but the problem is that you never know who is writing the review, so we will tend to see multi-paragraph reviews heaping praise on a business or conversely, excessively negative reviews that have been planted by a competitor.

"The truth about the reliability of customer reviews lies between one star and five stars. We have consumer reviews on our site. We verify the author of every one of them before we post them."

Schwartz said the type of complaints the BBB sees today are the same as they've always been: problems with an item or service, guarantee or warranty issues, delivery issues, problems with billing or collection, and advertising or sales issues. The industries that people are most likely to complain about include communications, entertainment, transportation, finances and shopping.

"Because these play such prominent roles in our lives, it stands to reason that we demand the highest possible quality of service. Unfortunately, problems arise in these types of businesses," he said.

While the types of issues have remained similar, a number of new challenges have come up in recent years.

"Being a consumer or owning a business in 2017 means having to deal with issues that never existed before. There's a huge difference between going to a local retailer and purchasing something over the Internet from a company or individual you have never met and which may not be looking out for your best interest," he said.

"It's up to consumers and businesses to be more vigilant than ever. And the learning curve never stops. The same technology that gives us the Internet is often subverted for criminal purposes and therein lie the double edges of the sword, convenience vs. risk."

Forewarned is forearmed, and Schwartz said fostering awareness of potential scams has taken on a greater importance.

"We place a tremendous emphasis on consumer education. In the 10 years I've been with the Better Business Bureau, I've learned and I've seen first-hand how education

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really is a main weapon that consumers have to protect themselves against becoming victims of fraud and identity theft," he said.

In addition to providing tips on its website, he said technology has helped the BBB with its mission.

"The Internet has made it much faster for consumers to get action on a complaint, but even more important, to be able to research before they sign a contract or put down a deposit," Schwartz said.

The Better Business Bureau has a charity arm called the Wise Giving Alliance (give.org) which is free for charities. Charities must adhere to 20 standards of accountability.

"That's especially important now to check out charities because of the prevalence of charity fraud; I call them charity cheats. We are very generous and our generosity is one of the tools that scammers and criminals use to deceive us," he said.

"I can tell you the other ones in the scammer's arsenal are fear, our sense of responding to an urgent call for action – for example, the grandchild in distress scam – and they appeal to our greed to some extent; we all want to get something for nothing and in the end it ends up costing us not only money, but also can result in identity theft," Schwartz added.

"Take a minute to research a business or a charity. Take the moment to visit the Better Business Bureau's website. The most important thing is research; that's the defining line. It only takes a moment to determine whether or not a company exists and whether or not you would feel comfortable doing business with it," he said.

"There's nothing more important than doing your research before signing a contract or putting down a deposit. Consumers do have time on their side and should never be pressured into making a decision without all of the relevant information they need."

He also said consumers should be wary if anyone wants payment through an untraceable means, such as a wire transfer, cashier's check or gift card. Be on your guard if you receive a call asking for personal information.

"No government institution, financial institution or legitimate business will call to ask you for personal information or payment. Imposter scams are the most common types of fraud," Schwartz said.

"We cannot trust caller ID because even though it appears to be a call from the government or law enforcement, that number may have been spoofed. They essentially fake the number that appears on your caller ID."

To find out more about scams, or to report one, go to bbb.org/scamtracker.

While some of the means have changed, the goals of the organization have remained steadfast through the decades.

"The longevity of the Better Business Bureau shows how valuable it is to both businesses and consumers and we have a proud record of helping both," he said. "A little bit of skepticism can go a long way to making smart consumer decisions." CL

Learn more at bbb.org/connecticut.

People notes

Eric Richardson

Michael S. Nappi Jr.

Eric Richardson recently joined the Cromwell Recreation and Youth Services Department as its youth services administrator. He is a graduate of Central Connecticut State University with a degree in criminology and played on the university's football team. He has worked as a behavioral specialist at the Boys and Girls Village in Milford, a juvenile probation officer in New Haven and a social worker for the state Department of Children and Families.

Michael S. Nappi Jr. was named the new vice president within Hartford HealthCare's Community Network Division for Independence at Home. He is responsible for the overall strategic direction of the division.

Karl Douglass Mueller finished his freshman year and received a merit scholarship for his high grades in the Euro Tech program, a dual degree program in German and engineering at the University of Connecticut.

Max Mueller was honored at Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy high school with an outstanding award in chemistry and the Phoenix Award for ranking first in his class.

Geri Gasior of Cromwell is among the members of the Sounds of New England Chorus who performed Nov. 4 at the Mandell Jewish Community Center in West Hartford. CL

Cromwell government agencies, schools, businesses, clubs, churches and all other civic organizations are invited to send us their upcoming events for inclusion in events spotlight and/or the community calendar. We also welcome people notes and news briefs for news roundup. You can send them to us at mjahne@turleyct.com or Cromwell LIFE, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

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Holiday LIFE

Finding the light in tough times

How to be grateful when all is not great

by Lynn Woike
LIFE Staff

It's easy to be grateful when you're in love, when you just got a big bonus, when you're healthy, when there's food on the table and when there's a new car parked in your driveway. Gratitude is not so easy when you are alone and in pain, when the cupboards are bare, when the vehicle that gets you to work needs repairs totaling two months rent and when the world seems to be crumbling.

Patricia Barone, co-founder of the West Hartford Counseling Center, has been working with adults who are struggling with life transitions, anxiety, depression, health-related issues, grief, loss and relational difficulties since 1984.

"In the short run, it may seem that what we want is what we need in order to feel more happiness and inner peace, but actually it may be just the opposite," she said. "Research supports the premise that gratitude for what we already have helps us to feel greater inner peace and happiness. The science of gratitude suggests that happiness is not a destination or a possession; you cannot wear it or consume it. Expressing thanks and giving gratitude in the present moment for what is is what leads to greater contentment and inner peace.

"An article in the New York Times suggested that, whether or not we feel grateful, we can intentionally choose to practice gratitude and by doing that, we will raise our happiness level."

Barone suggests finding three things a day for which you feel or you can imagine feeling gratitude.

"For example, it might be a clerk's smile or a snowstorm that keeps you home from work, or the way your dog greets you. It can be as subtle as the feel of a cool breeze on a hot day, or how cozy fleece feels on your skin on a cold day," she said.

With time, "the transformative power of gratitude" will bring a sense of peace, softening the harshness of life's struggles.

Founder of Copper Beech Institute and Associate Director at Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center Brandon Nappi

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said, "I believe that as long as we are alive, there is more right with us than is wrong with us."

By focusing on how hopelessly broken life seems, fear is stoked and "there is a temptation to catastrophize our lives … leaving us feeling overwhelmed and paralyzed."

Bringing an alternate energy source to our challenges is helpful, he said, explaining, "Gratitude is a limitless source of energy when we feel overwhelmed by the struggles of our lives or the world. Gratitude can be a powerful resource to free ourselves from the trap of cynicism and despair. Ask yourself, 'What's right with this moment?' There's always an answer, no matter how dire the situation. The practice of gratitude immediately activates our present moment awareness. We wake up to the blessing of what has been there all along, though we may not have noticed it. It might be the presence of a friend, the smell of fallen leaves, or the familiar melody of a favorite song. Using the energy of gratitude, we can begin to bring appreciation to our lives and realize that there is actually much to be grateful for in every moment no matter what."

A mindfulness teacher, he wrote, "Somehow the gray November horizon and the crunch of leaves underfoot inspire me to be mindful of the countless gifts I've received in my life. I have enough to eat. My persistent flaws aren't often embarrassingly visible. I have enough documentaries on my smart TV to fill two lifetimes. My tween children mostly like me," in an article for Huffpost's The Blog last November titled "Platitude of Gratitude: The Shadow Side of Being Thankful."

Gratitude – as it is practiced by the great spiritual traditions – reveals connection.

"The art of being thankful connects us to those who have given us gifts while inspiring us to be gift-givers in the world. The truth is that our well-being and the well-being of others are connected. Everything and everyone is connected to everything and everyone else," Nappi said.

Experiencing that connectedness is one of the things that helped Eve Schreiber get through the worst times of her life.

"Life was a blur, hazy. I had a lot of different jobs because I couldn't keep one. I was raised by a single working mother, so I felt I had to live up to her independence," Schreiber said.

One morning, she showed up for work with a four-inch knife gash on her upper thigh, having no memory of it after drinking and blacking out the night before. A friend in recovery took her to rehab and she stayed.

"Attending [Narcotics Anonymous] meetings and participating in the fellowship gave me a sense of belonging. The camaraderie, the support and getting to know myself better through step work has given me a different set of eyes on myself. I got a better understanding of why I did the things I did when I used drugs," she said.

Before that self-reflection, she didn't much like life and saw nothing for which to be grateful.

"I was self-destructive. I was being reckless. I made a lot of mistakes, and I ended serving time in jail for drinking. There you're told when to eat and when to sleep, when you're allowed to make a phone call" Schreiber said.

While in jail, she practiced gratitude. She was grateful for everything – from simple gestures of kindness, to the strength and friendship of other recovering addicts.

"When I got out, it was like a sense of privilege. I was waking up in the morning and not being told when to wake up. Driving is a privilege. Being able to use the phone and not take it for granted," she said. "I'm grateful for a second chance. It's like a do-over."

Eighteen years have passed and she still counts every blessing. Although she's recovering from surgery, is unable to work and therefore has no income, she is grateful.

"It could be worse. I could have died," she said. "I'm grateful for sunrise and sunset, waking up in my own bed. I can walk on two legs. I can use two arms. I have the gifts of sight, smell, hearing. I have a sense of gratitude. My life really isn't that bad." CL

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Holiday LIFE

Opening the mind to *gratefulness*

Yoga practitioners share their tips for finding calm

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Sure, it's the most wonderful time of the year, but between the mile-long to-do list and the crowds and the cold and all the demands on your time, it can sometimes be a challenge to be grateful, even as we have a holiday that reminds us to give thanks.

If you've ever taken a yoga class and spent a few blissful moments in savasana, you probably know that yoga can calm the mind. But even yoga instructors have to deal with long lines and traffic jams.

"Yoga teaches stillness, presence; it quiets the mind. However, it is a practice, and we are all human. Sometimes my house is a mess, the kids are running around, the dog is

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barking; at the same time I'm trying to make dinner and the doorbell rings. Life can be a test of patience. At that moment I have a choice. Do I scream, or can I take a deep breath and find gratitude for this crazy life of mine? So, I bring my hand to my belly and feel the breath come into my body and then exhale and focus on letting go. Again, it's a practice, and staying focused for just a few seconds can be work in the beginning, but with practice I can take control of the thoughts and come back to stillness, feeling gratitude for all of my many blessings," said Shelley Jansen, studio director of Bikram Yoga Glastonbury.

Jansen started her own yoga practice in 1998 while living in Australia. After moving back to the U.S. in 2000, she was introduced to Bikram Yoga and attended training in Los Angeles in 2002, opening her own studio in 2003.

While Jansen said that a Yoga Asana class can be a good place to start, you can also begin in the here and now. Just go outside.

"Simply taking a walk in the woods and being very conscious of the trees and the leaves can be a perfect place to start," she added.

Richard Mercer of Bikram Yoga Simsbury in Weatogue knows a little something about stress. A former full-scholarship Division 1A college football player, he previously worked as a vice president at Travelers, running an IT division.

"I've been practicing Bikram Yoga since 2004 when I was in my late 40s. I heard about it through a friend and, although I had never done yoga before, after my first class I knew it would be a lifelong practice," he said.

At the time, although he could lift a lot of weight, he couldn't get his arms over his head or touch his toes.

"What I found surprising, however, was the effect yoga had on relaxing my mind. I didn't realize how much I needed the brain break as well as the stretching. I convinced my [now wife] Laurie to try it with me, and she found it helped with her neck and back pain and also with handling the stress of her job. Being able to share the experience was great," he noted.

After practicing Bikram for a few years, he decided to go for teacher training, attending a nine-week, full-time teacher training in Hawaii with more than 300 people from more than 40 countries.

"I called Laurie and told her that this was a business; we needed to open a studio. I quit my corporate job, and we opened Bikram Yoga Simsbury in 2009. Laurie went to teacher training in 2010, so we both teach," he said.

Mercer noted the benefits are far- reaching.

"You [learn to] understand the saying, 'If you are not grateful for what you have, you'll never be grateful for what you think you want.' I thought that all there was was the business, corporate world. Opening this yoga business makes me personally grateful because I believe it saved my life and has helped so many others improve their own lives," he said.

He recommends not doing too much too soon.

"Just come in and start. Don't expect too much right away, just take your time and let it happen. A regular yoga practice allows your mind to be calm and to focus, and this creates the space for gratefulness. We always encourage our folks to appreciate the small improvements, millimeters of improvement in flexibility and strength. The peacefulness, the calmness that yoga brings, this opens the mind to gratefulness."

Julie Starr, owner of Starr Yoga in West Hartford, also noted that the postures aren't the goal.

"The practice of yoga is just one of the eight 'paths of yoga.' The physical practice helps you feel certain things that you can then apply to situations off your mat. One of these is gratitude. When you focus on your breath in class, you feel grateful for your lungs and the air that we breathe. Every morning I am thank-

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ful to be alive and have healthy organs so I can breathe comfortably. The physical poses are challenging and remind me to be thankful for my body and its ability to do the poses. When I walk my daughter to school, I am thankful that I have the ability to do so. To be able to take a yoga class and to have an hour to do something for myself, to have the means to do so, I am thankful," Starr said.

Starr said there are many paths into yoga and meditation, and you can start small. She recommends online videos for those nervous to take a class right away, such as YogaGlo, or meditation apps such as Insight Timer and Buddhify.

"The simplest way I find to bring more gratitude in one's life is to remind yourself how lucky and thankful you are. Repeat a simple mantra when you wake up or every time you look in the mirror. It can be as simple as 'Life is good.' In life, we get back what we give out. Practice gratitude and you will receive gratitude from the world around you."

Gina Uricchio, a Rocky Hill resident who teaches at Live Right Wellness in Old Wethersfield, has been practicing for more than 15 years.

"It's a daily essential piece of my day that incorporates movement and meditation," she said. "My practice keeps me grounded and able to trust my journey in this world and that all is unfolding as it should. Practicing gratitude every day naturally changes your vibration and moods instantly. Just saying thank you is enough."

"Practicing gratitude every day naturally changes your vibration and moods instantly. Just saying thank you is enough."

– Gina Uricchio

It's not that she doesn't have her challenges. She even found a way to do yoga in bed while recovering following a mastectomy.

"If I can say thank you, even if it's for the cup of coffee I'm drinking, it immediately changes my vibration. With my yoga practice I can easily bring my nervous system to a state of balance, which in turn helps me manage my emotions," she said.

Lisa Romano, who opened Glastonbury Barre and Yoga in April 2016, has only been practicing yoga for a few years.

"It was a transformative experience that went beyond the physical," she said.

Yoga helps her count her blessings, which can set the tone for the day.

She said that this is especially important when life is less than ideal.

"For people who are going through difficult times, being able to take an hour for themselves to notice their breath and their body, this might be the only time of the day to practice self-care. People often have a difficult time taking time for themselves, and dedicating an hour on the schedule to yoga solves that. Oftentimes, the practice of yoga is combined with journaling, visualization and meditation," Romano said. "For me, personally, yoga has taught me that in any stressful situation, my breath is vital to staying in control. … We are all going to experience traveling hassles, traffic, or bad news. Deep breathing and stretching instantly calm you down. And for that life lesson, I am grateful." **CL**

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Holiday LIFE

Giving thanks across faith traditions

by Allie Rivera
LIFE Staff

With Thanksgiving rapidly approaching, many people take the time to pause and reflect on their gratitude. In various faith and cultural groups throughout Connecticut, the concept of gratitude is an important element of practice throughout the whole year.

"Amidah is one of the central prayers that we have in Judaism," explained Cantor Lauren Phillips of Congregation Beth Israel in West Hartford. "It's made up of a series of blessings. One of the blessings is the Modin prayer, this blessing of thanksgiving."

Phillips explained that the blessings said change depending on the day on which it is said, however the Modin remains constant.

"It's always included, no matter when we're saying this prayer," she said.

According to Phillips, the concept of gratitude remains important in the faith throughout the year in that it strengthens the relationship with God

"We incorporate a constant gratitude," she said. "We offer things to God at all times of day."

Though gratitude remains the constant in the faith, Phillips said that that thankfulness goes hand-in-hand with another concept.

"The prayer for peace comes right after the prayer for gratitude," she said. "It reminds us not to take things for granted and to be grateful for the blessing that we have in life."

In Judaism, the other central holiday for gratitude came about in early October with Sukkot, a week-long tradition that commemorates the harvest.

"We build temporary huts called Sukkahs, and we eat our meals in them. Some people even choose to sleep in them," Phillips said. "By building these temporary structures and eating our meals in them, it reminds us that, when we emerge from the Sukkah, we remember how lucky we are to have these dwellings."

Tessa Beauregard, associate pastor at the First Church of Christ, Congregational, in Wethersfield, said the concept of gratitude is similarly important in her faith.

"Thanksgiving is an important virtue for Christians in our tradition," she said. "It's connecting the peace of God with our attitude of thanksgiving and gratitude."

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According to Beauregard, practicing true gratitude for all that God has provided is not only a challenge, but often a sacrifice.

"We call thanksgiving a sacrifice," she said. "To bring yourself to a place of gratitude is hard. You're aligning your heart with the heart of God."

Though that work may be difficult, Beauregard stressed that it is important in her faith to do so.

"God says in the psalms that that sacrifice is more pleasing to him than the Old Testament sacrifice of animals," she said.

"Whatever is happening in our lives, the attitude of gratitude is important to God."

In her own experience, Beauregard said she has found that not practicing gratitude also leads to unhappiness.

"I've noticed in myself when I go through times when I forget to be thankful and I put my focus on what's wrong, that breeds a kind of discontentment or disgruntlement," she said. "That thankfulness is a really practical way of focusing on the many good things that we do have. It's kind of a mental health thing as well. It's part of our faith, but like all matters of faith, there's something practical that comes out of it."

That idea of mindful gratitude throughout daily life is a key element of Buddhism as well. Kathy Simpson, a community dharma leader in West Simsbury, explained that the faith focuses on an open-mindedness that allows gratitude to flourish.

"With Buddhism there's kindness, doing a kindness for another and being grateful for a kindness that's been done," she said. "I just feel like everything is a potential gift. Every person that comes into your life, every situation you encounter, there's something to be learned from everything."

While Buddhism, like most other religions, has a wide variety of practices within the faith, Simpson explained that the overall goal is to practice mindfulness at all times.

"It's an openhearted approach to everything one encounters in life," she said. "Being grateful for all of it is a side effect to the openheartedness."

Though the faith does not have specific prayers for those practicing to say, Simpson said that, through practice, life can become like a prayer.

"That openness and receptivity is part of everything that we do. In a way, I guess that's a prayer," she said. "You realize things in their essence the more mindful you are, so it becomes like a prayer."

Simpson, who has been practicing Buddhism for nearly two decades, said the faith's focus on being open to anything that comes along can only lead to gratitude.

"It's really a reverence for anything that comes our way," she said. "Anyone and anything has value that can teach. We become more appreciative as we go along." **CL**

> **"It's really a reverence for anything that comes our way. Anyone and anything has value that can teach. We become more appreciative as we go along."**
>
> **–Kathy Simpson**

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Wendy Fish-Lawrence & David Lawrence, Artistic Directors

Holiday LIFE

by Olivia Piper
LIFE Staff

Is being grateful good for you?

Showing gratitude.

It may seem like a simple concept, and one that is often mentioned during the holiday season. Though we are often told that we should be grateful, how does it help us? Is being grateful good for you? If you ask Dr. Diane Hayden, an experienced health and wellness professional and the owner and publisher of Natural Nutmeg Magazine, she will tell you exactly how being grateful is beneficial for both your physical and mental health.

"There is a special kind of magic in gratitude. It raises our consciousness, boosts our energy and enhances our self-worth," Hayden said of the mental benefits of being more grateful in everyday life.

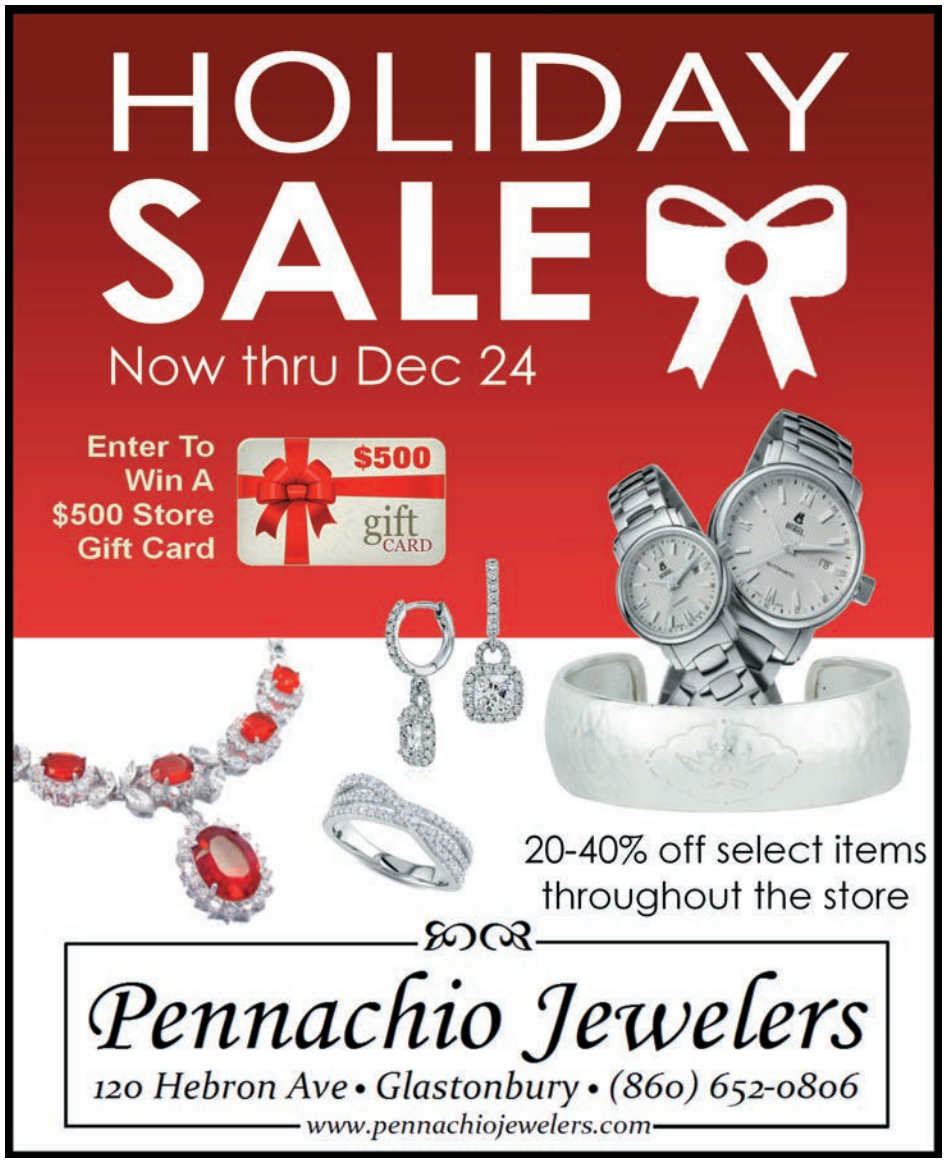
Additionally, there are actual physical benefits to gratefulness, as people who are grateful are more likely to take care of their health and, according to Dr. Hayden, experience the physical benefits of improved sleep quality and being better connected with one's body.

"Think of how you feel when you are grateful for something and when you say 'Thank you' for something. What are the actual physical feelings you have in your body? If we can become more in tune to these feelings, we can stay in a more grateful and positive state, and it also helps you to notice when you aren't feeling well," Hayden said.

In addition to bolstering one's confidence or sleep schedule, being grateful every day is similar to any type of habit in that it will begin to impact different areas of one's life.

"Practicing gratitude is a fundamental component of the law of attraction and learning how to manifest and create your ideal life. The theory is that, in order to bring what you want into your life, you have to be grateful for what you already have and you have to give thanks for what you receive in the future. This enables a constant flow of positive energy to go into and out of your life. If you are not thankful for what you receive, it will block the flow and you will have a difficult time attracting what you want," Hayden said.

As for how to practice gratitude, one does not have to wait for a gift-giving holiday or birthday, but can instead begin to notice and note the small moments in each day that bring joy and thankfulness. **CL**



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News roundup

Faenza wins another term

Republican Enzo Faienza won another term as mayor in the Nov. 7 municipal election. He will lead a Town Council with a 4-3 GOP majority.

Other winners in the council race were Republicans Richard Newton, Samantha Slade and Frank Emanuele and Democrats James Demetriades, Myron Johnson and Allan Waters. Democrat Ed Maley and Republicans Amanda Drew and Steve Wygonowski were elected to the Board of Finance.

Republicans Mike Camilleri, Jeffrey Matullo and Lindsey Merli won seats on the Board of Education, as did Democrats Laurie Cantwell and Paul Sousa. Democrat Joan Ahlquist won election as town clerk and Republican Doug Sienna as tax collector.

Additional candidates won seats on Planning and Zoning, Board of Assessment Appeals and Zoning Board of Appeals. A referendum on multiple changes to the town charter went down to defeat by a 1,198-1,063 vote.

Fire department re-purposes truck

Fire Chief Michael Terenzio said fire departments need to provide 24/7 protection that their constituencies expect, and are entitled to receive, whether there are adequate funds available or not. That is particularly true in these times with all of the challenges of the state budget and its impact on local communities.

Pondering the decision to purchase a new piece of apparatus in the current fiscal climate, and facing the immediate need to replace an unreliable and limited rescue unit, the department has decided to repurpose another less-utilized pumper back to front-line status. At the end of their service lives, apparatus are typically moved into reserve status, where they remain for years and are utilized as replacements when a first-line unit goes in for service or repair.

The minimum cost to re-purpose the unit and continue providing services to the community was able to be met within the existing budget

Fire department re-purposes truck

rather than asking for hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy a new piece of equipment, the chief said.

Equipment from the old rescue truck was remounted on the re-purposed apparatus and it has been re-commissioned as Tactical Unit 4. Additional compartment space was provided with the removal of extra fire attack equipment not required to make room for "job boxes" that were installed and permanently mounted to accommodate the additional rescue equipment.

Landscapers discover fire

The Cromwell Fire Department responded to a call at 39 Grove Road the morning of Oct. 10 when a landscaping contractor working nearby noticed smoke coming from the roof of the single-family home. Two engines, a ladder truck, an ambulance and a command vehicle were dispatched to the scene.

Additional aid was summoned from the Rocky Hill, Middletown, South District and Westfield fire departments. They found a well-developed fire taking hold of the kitchen that was beginning to extend into the attic void above.

Firefighters quickly located two pets, a cat and a dog, that succumbed to smoke inhalation. The fire was quickly contained and extinguished. The fire marshal's office is investigating the cause of the fire and has ruled out foul play.

Supermarket fire extinguished

Quick and deliberate action on the part of the Cromwell Fire Department averted a large potential dollar loss for the local Stop & Shop supermarket and its customers on Oct. 12. Emergency response dispatchers at the police department received a call reporting smoke coming from the employee lounge area at 8:38 a.m.

The fire department dispatched two engines, a ladder, an ambulance and a command vehicle. Additional firefighters and equipment were summoned from the Rocky Hill and Middletown fire departments.

Cromwell firefighters entered the area and attacked the fire with dry chemical extinguishers rather than water because it involved electrically charged equipment

Additional personnel simultaneously set up ventilation to draw the smoke away from the adjacent delicatessen area.

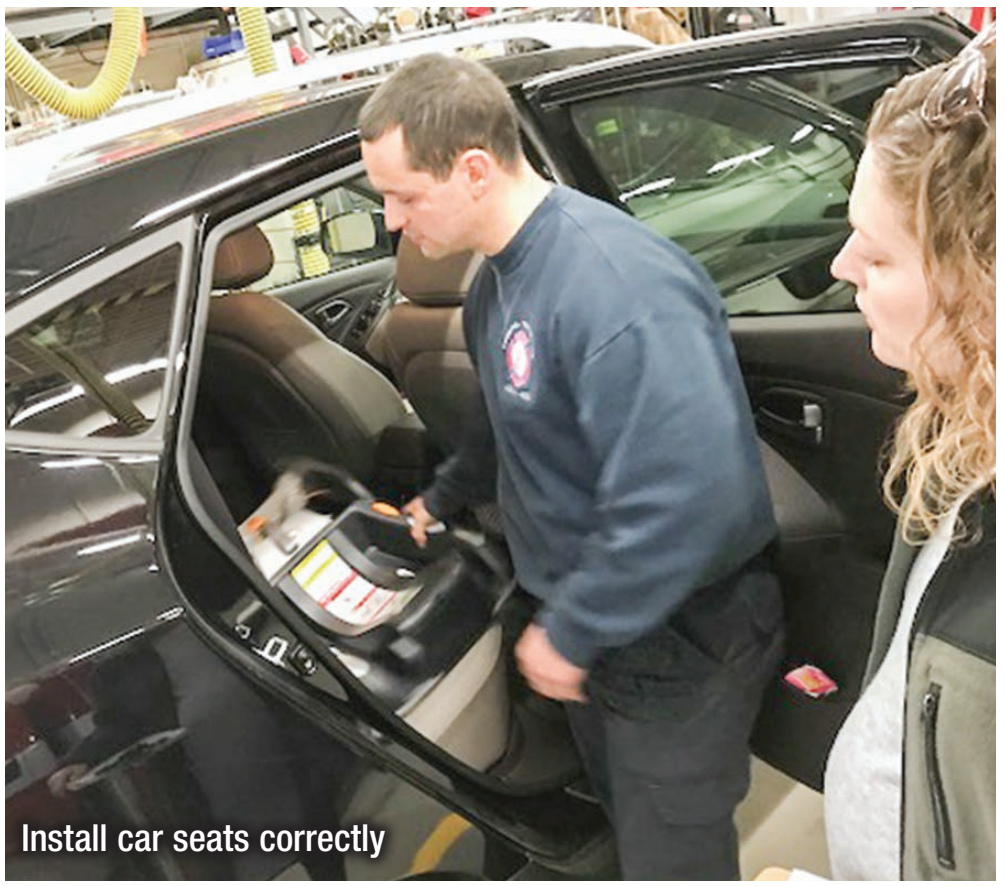
Chief Michael Terenzio said the fire was quickly extinguished and damage was confined to the room of origin. Firefighters were on scene for little more than an hour and the store was able to re-open shortly after. Initial investigation is centered around a malfunctioning heater located in the ceiling.

Carpino honored

State Rep. Christie Carpino was honored by the Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council at its 27th annual meeting. MCSAAC presented Carpino with the 2017 Terry Concannon Elected Official Award in recognition of her substance abuse prevention efforts.

She has worked to reduce the opioid crisis by supporting bipartisan initiatives requiring stricter prescription guidelines, limiting excess supplies of opioids, and increasing patient education and treatment options.

In addition, Carpino has fought against reducing drug-free school zones to keep drugs away from children. She is shown with MCSAAC Director Betsey Chadwick.


Install car seats correctly

Carpino honored

Install car seats correctly

It's not as easy as it may seem to install a child's car seat. Experts estimate that anywhere from 75 to 90 percent of seats are installed or used incorrectly. But help is available.

The Cromwell Fire Department has partnered with the National Child Passenger Safety Board and Safe Kids Worldwide to implement a child safety seat installation program. That's important because a recently enacted state law places more requirements on the installation of child safety car seats.

Two local firefighters attended certification training and are now skilled in the installation of new safety seats, inspection of existing safety seats and instruction of the proper way to secure children in safety seats. The department offers this service to residents at no cost.

They are available Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. by appointment, call 860-635-6155. Career firefighter Brandon Hinds is shown performing an installation.

The Cromwell Police Department also has certified child car safety seat installers.

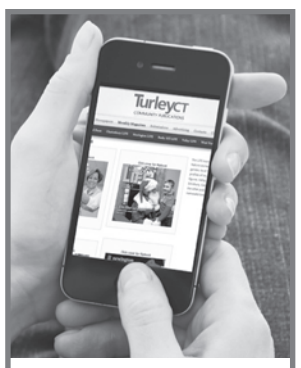
Free programs at Adult Education

Adult Education, GED preparation classes, independent study, online and classroom instruction are offered for Cromwell and Rocky Hill residents at Middletown Adult Education.

Free day and evening programs are offered at its 398 Main St. location. Enrollment is ongoing, call 860-343-6044.

Clarification

A story in the October issue quoted mayoral candidate Kenneth Smith as saying that incumbent Mayor Enzo Faienza ran unopposed in the previous two municipal elections. Faienza had an opponent in the 2013 election and was unopposed in the 2015 election. CL



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8. Infections
9. Difficulty urinating/defecating
10. Eye redness/tearing or spasms

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December calendar

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

2 **Cookie Walk,** 9 a.m. to noon, Hilltop Covenant Church, 82 Hicksville Road, hilltopcovenant.org

4 **Fall Fun Crafts with Jess,** 10:15 a.m., Town Hall activity room, for grades 2-5, 860-632-3467 or cromwellrec.com, also Dec. 11 and 18

5 **Let's Go Art**, 3:30 p.m., for grades K-2, Edna C. Stevens School, 860-632-3467 or cromwellrec.com, also Dec. 12

7 **Vinyasa Flow Yoga,** 7:30 p.m., Town Hall arch room, 860-632-3467 or cromwellrec.com

6 **Let's Go Art,** 3:30 p.m., for grades 3-5, Woodside Intermediate School, 860-632-3467 or cromwellrec.com, also Dec. 13 and 20

Mad Science, 3:30 p.m., for grades 1-2, Edna C. Stevens School, 860-632-3467 or cromwellrec.com, also Dec. 13 and 20

Beach Body PiYo, 7:30 p.m., Edna C. Stevens School gymnasium, 860-632-3467 or cromwellrec.com, also Dec. 13 and 20

7 **Music & Movement with Jess,** 1 p.m., Town Hall gymnasium, for ages 2-5, also Dec. 14, 860-632-3467 or cromwellrec.com

Mad Science, 3:30 p.m., for grades 3-5, Woodside Intermediate School, 860-632-3467 or cromwellrec.com, also Dec. 14 and 21

9 **The Light of Christmas**

Holiday Open House, 1-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m., Stevens-Frisbie House, 395 Main St., 860-635-0501 or cromwellhistory.org, also 1-4 p.m. Dec. 10

15 **Parents Night Out**, 6-9 p.m., for grades K-5, Town Hall gymnasium, $25 per child, 860-632-3467 or cromwellrec.com

20 **Middlesex County Blue Star Mothers Connecticut Chapter** 3, 7 p.m., Town Hall, 41 West St., middlesexcountybluestarmothers.org

Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

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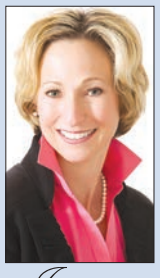

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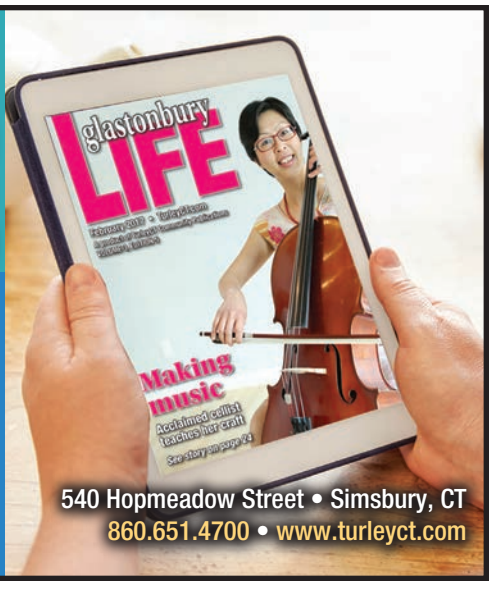

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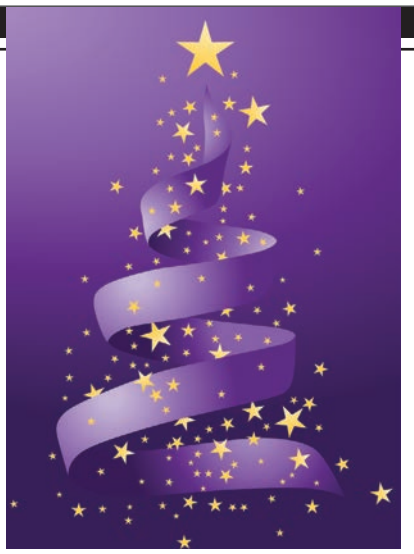
Events spotlight



NOLA Benefit Concert
Nov. 17, 6:15 p.m.
Rocky Hill High School auditorium
rhhsroyalblues@gmail.org
Come out for a night of music while also benefiting the Rocky Hill High School Band and NOLA programs. The night kicks off with music performed by the RHHS Jazz Band and then comes music by the Funky Dawgz Brass Band, a New Orleans-inspired party band. Tickets are $15 for general admission, $10 for students and senior citizens.

St Josephine Bakhita Holiday Fair
Nov. 18, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
St. James Parish Center
767 Elm St., Rocky Hill
860-529-8655 or stjamesrh.org
Get into the holiday spirit and enjoy Christmas shopping at the various crafters and vendors, pick up a gift from the silent auction or teacup auction, or make a purchase from the ornament tree. Some returning features include the stroll down the cookie walk and the bake sale, as well as the marketplace and St. James Café for a bite to eat. Admission is free.

A Celebration of Moser School
Nov. 18, 1-4 p.m.
Community Center
761 Old Main St., Rocky Hill
860-563-6704 or inforhhistory@gmail.com
The Rocky Hill Historical Society hosts this afternoon of memories of Moser School, which was in operation from 1949 to 2007. There will be a presentation on the Moser family and the school's history, a pictorial history of the school, musical entertainment and an opportunity to see the items that were stored in the recently opened time capsule.

Rocky Hill Athletic Hall of Fame Induction
Nov. 19, 2 p.m.
Wethersfield Country Club
76 Country Club Road
hof06067@gmail.com
Seven individuals will be the newest inductees into the Rocky Hill Athletic Hall of Fame. They are: Chris Cozza, 2005, football; Josh Manoian, 2001, hockey; Lauren Stock, 2007, basketball; Eric Thorsell, 1999, baseball and basketball; Marco Tirillo, 2000, wrestling; Peter and Trish Egan, John J. McVicar Distinguished Service Award. Tickets are $35 for adults and $10 for children under 10. Proceeds will fund scholarships at Rocky Hill High School for deserving college-bound student athletes.

Cookie Walk
Dec. 2, 9 a.m. to noon
Hilltop Covenant Church
82 Hicksville Road, Cromwell
860-635-4032 or hilltopcovenant.org
Cookie Walk IX is made even more special this year by the fact that the church is celebrating 125 years of ministry in Cromwell. Enter the seasonally decorated sanctuary and stroll down the center aisle, which will be lined with dozens of homemade cookies and other baked goods, craft items, and gift baskets available for purchase. Enjoy a complimentary cup of hot cider or coffee. Children can write a letter to Santa at the North Pole Annex.

Holiday Fair
Dec. 2, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Rocky Hill United Methodist Church
623 Old Main St., Rocky Hill
860-529-2442
Celebrate the holiday season at this fair featuring hand-crafted gift items and decorations, homemade baked goods, candy, Grandma's Attic and more. Santa Claus is scheduled to make an appearance at 11 a.m.

Blue Christmas Service
Dec. 21, 7 p.m.
Rocky Hill United Methodist Church
623 Old Main St., Rocky Hill
860-529-2442
This is a special night of reflection held to help people who are dealing with loneliness, sorrow, alienation and sadness. The service offers a way for people to claim those feelings and still feel surrounded by the compassionate love of God. **CL**

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Slice of LIFE

photos by Allie Rivera

Every Tuesday and Thursday, Cromwell toddlers and young children get the opportunity to come together for the Parent/Toddler Play Group hosted by Cromwell Recreation and Youth Services in the town hall gymnasium. With Halloween falling on a Tuesday this year, the children were invited to dress in costumes and play Halloween-themed games.

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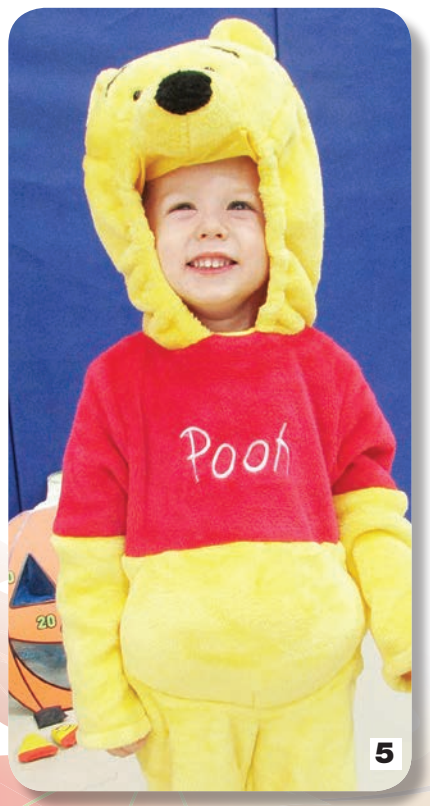

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Cromwell Recreation and Youth Services Halloween Parade

1. Bailey Richardson, 6 months, was a curious pumpkin inspecting a pinwheel held by her mother, Erica Richardson. **2.** Four-year-old Madeline Sabatino shows off her princess gown. **3.** Brothers Nathaniel, 3, and Gabriel Lewis, 1, were excited to be in costume. **4.** Supergirl Emilyn Brade, 4, stopped for a sweet treat. **5.** Dressed as Winnie the Pooh, 3-year-old Joshua Blanchette spent time tossing bean bags into a wooden pumpkin. **6.** Oscar Nawrot, 3, paused for a moment before running around the gym with a bright red ball. **7.** Leeanne Palmer, 21 months old, dressed as Anna from the movie "Frozen," complete with pink cape.

Student of the month

Dominic Pagano always has a smile

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Dominic Pagano sat down with his lunch tray, a simple assortment of chicken nuggets and bread.

"I got an extra milk because I was thirsty from running outside," the 7-year-old said, matter-of-factly.

A second grade student at Edna C. Stevens School, Dominic is known for trying to stay active.

"I like gym," he said. "I like how we play different games."

During his physical education classes, he enjoys running around participating in the daily activities, including his favorite, Pacman tag.

"There are lines on the gym floor and there are two people who are taggers," he explained, unaware of the connection to the arcade game of the 1980s. "You have to stay on the lines and if you run into one of the taggers and they get you then you become an obstacle."

In addition to running during P.E. and recess, Dominic stays active by playing on both the parks and recreation soccer and baseball teams.

"Soccer is my favorite," he said. "I've been playing since I was in kindergarten.

Currently in the height of the soccer season, he practices with his team twice per week and has games nearly every Saturday. Along with being an athlete, Dominic is also an accomplished hip hop dancer. Now in his second year taking lessons at New England Dance on Shunpike Road, he loves getting to practice hip hop every week.

"My friends were in it and so I tried it and it was really cool," he said.

He loves his weekly rehearsals and said it is the big recital in May that keeps him most excited.

"I have two dances, a fast one and a slow one," he said. "When you get on the stage it isn't really scary because you practice a lot beforehand."

When not running down the field or dancing in the studio, Dominic enjoys reading a wide variety of genres.

"I read a lot of books," he said. "Some are fake and some are non-fiction."

His favorite book that he recently read was "Did You Say Fire?" by Joy Cowley.

During his free time he enjoys being outside with his cousins and his dog, a black and brown hound named Denver.

"I really love my dog," he said. "He likes to run around and he likes to eat fast. He weighs like 86 pounds."

The animal residents in Dominic's home also include two cats named Romeo and Moe, as well as fish. One of the things that brings him joy each June is when he travels with his father to Rhode Island.

"I like going in the water," he said. "In the back yard there's a lake, but it has salt in it and it goes to the ocean."

To those who know him best, Dominic brings a similar level of joy with him wherever he goes.

"He's respectful, he's kind, he's caring, he has an eagerness to learn and he always has a smile," Principal Lucille DiTunno said.

"Dominic Pagano is a kind, caring and passionate boy who loves being around people and making them laugh," his mother Jennifer Pagano said. "He is an incredible kid who lights up the room no matter where he goes."

Teacher Renee Kucharski has witnessed the student's kindness and growth firsthand. She was also his teacher in kindergarten.

"It's amazing to see his growth from then to now," she said. "He always works very hard at everything he does, whether it's school or dance or soccer. He always puts in a lot of effort."

It is these attributes that make Dominic stand out from the crowd.

"He really is a role model," DiTunno said. **CL**

"He's respectful, he's kind, he's caring, he has an eagerness to learn and he always has a smile."

– Principal Lucille DiTunno

Second-grader Dominic Pagano, 7, stays active in soccer, baseball and dance, but his teachers and family recognize him for his hard work and compassion for others.

Photo by Allie Rivera

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David Ngibuini '14
Computer Science Major
Portfolio Manager, CIGNA

"When I was studying computer science, I would ask myself, why am I studying art history? Why am I studying geography? Now I know. My liberal arts education helps me to draw from different branches of knowledge so that I can reach a creative solution, rather than facing the world purely as a computer scientist."

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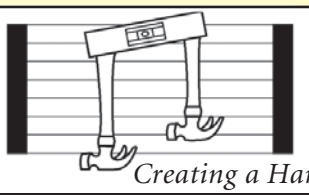

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Editorial

A few thoughts for the newly elected

Election Day has come and gone and the next group of elected officials will soon begin their work. Some of them are incumbents who have done this before; others are new to the process.

Whatever the case, we want to congratulate those who were victorious in their quest. You convinced the voters to place their trust in you by offering your ideas and insight for making this town a better place in which to live and work.

We also want to thank those whose efforts came up short. You should be praised for giving so much of your time and energy to our democratic process and for offering to serve your community.

Those now serving on the Town Council, Board of Education and in other government bodies would do well to remember why they were elected. Residents didn't vote for you because they want you to engage in partisan politics. They didn't vote for you because they want you to stubbornly hold to political ideology and constantly fight with the opposition.

They voted for you to run the government and the public schools on their behalf. They expect results, not stalemate. That's not too much to ask.

There will no doubt be times when you disagree, but don't give up. Talk to each other. Even better, listen to each other. Look for ways to achieve a result that offers the best benefit for the most people, even if it isn't exactly what you originally wanted.

Want an example of what not to do? Look at our elected leaders in Washington, D.C., who are so consumed by their partisan political games that they have become ineffective. All they do is dig in their heels and oppose everything and anything the other side proposes.

Politics is supposed to be the art of compromise, not ramming through one's own agenda and the heck with everyone else. It can best be achieved at the local level, among a small number of people who are neighbors as well as town officials.

Here's hoping that our newly elected leaders can set an example that those at the state and federal levels would be wise to emulate.

Cromwell LIFE

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]

First, Winter Storm Names...

Naming winter storms is unique to WFSB, dating back to the days of the Travelers Weather Service. It's a tradition that started in 1971, that our station is proud to carry on today!

Names are easy to remember, especially the ones that have been attached to Connecticut's biggest winter storms. If you've lived in Connecticut long enough you'll remember Blizzard Larry (the Blizzard of '78); or, perhaps the big ice storm of December 1973 named Felix. In this decade, there was Storm Alfred in late October of 2011 when heavy, wet snow caused a record power outage. And, it was Blizzard Charlotte that dumped up to 40" of snow on the state in 2013.

In order for a storm to get a name, it has to meet certain criteria: we must expect at least 6" of snow for much of the state, and/or ½" of ice accretion (a significant ice storm).

When it comes to the list of names, past themes have included "former First Ladies" and notable sports figures with ties to Connecticut. For this season, we had our team of reporters (since they're the ones having to be live from the field, 'in' the storms) provide 2 names each for a letter of the alphabet and then let our viewers vote on Facebook. **CL**

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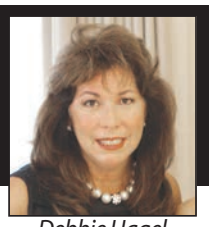

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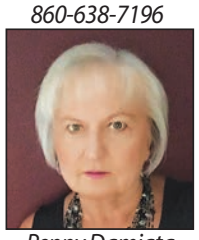

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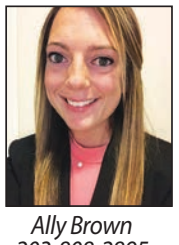

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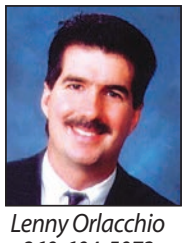

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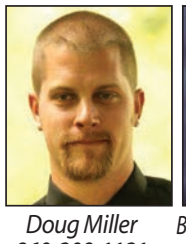

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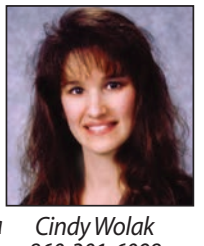

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